

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

SEPTEMBER 1971

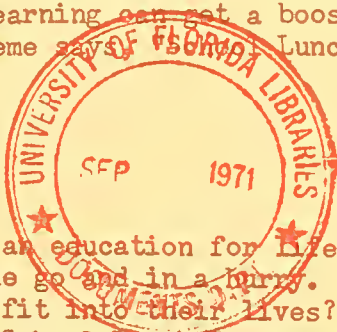
No. 92

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

Closing The Nutrition Gap. This year, National School Lunch Week, October 10-16, takes on added meaning. It celebrates the 25th Anniversary of a program authorized by Congress "to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children." Since the National School Lunch Act was signed in 1946, the basic program was broadened and expanded. During its first year, the National School Lunch Program reached 6.6 million children. In the 1970-71 school year, more than 24.5 million children in nearly 80,000 schools participated. Of these 7.3 million children received free or reduced price lunches. Expansion over the past 25 years has included a school breakfast program, Federal help to provide kitchen equipment for child feeding programs, and, in 1970, emphasis on improving all child feeding programs and particularly on reaching needy children with a school lunch. Schools across the country are planning their own observances for National School Lunch Week. On October 13, most of the schools will be serving the same lunch menu, the 1971 Universal Menu: School pizza, green beans and butter, tossed salad (spinach, lettuce and tomato with oil dressing), applesauce, brownie, and milk. Because of the National School Lunch Program, schools can be more fun and learning can get a boost. Or as the National School Lunch Week theme says, "School Lunch Closes The Nutrition Gap."

THE SCHOOL LUNCH BUNCH

What's It All About? Getting an education for life in a modern world keeps young people on the go and in a hurry. Where does the National School Lunch Program fit into their lives? A new USDA filmstrip and slide set, "The School Lunch Bunch -- Nutrition in Today's Schools," tells how the Nation's largest lunch program works. It explains who uses and runs the program and why it's important for today's student to eat a proper lunch. Slide sets (Spanish or English) are available for \$11.00 a set from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Copies of the filmstrip (English only) can be ordered for \$5.50 from Photo Lab, Inc. 3825 Georgia Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. A record (English only) with audible and inaudible frequency pulses to change frames manually or automatically is available from either source for \$3.00. An audio tape in Spanish for manual projection with slide sets is available for \$1.00. Narrative guides in both Spanish and English are supplied with each purchase.



FALL FOOD PREVIEW

All indications add up to food prices holding steady this fall. Coupled with food supply trends, the Government's ceiling on most food prices reinforces the outlook for little overall change.

The factor that's designed to give relief from inflation--the price ceiling--works like this for food:

- The government has provided a ceiling on food prices rather than an absolute freeze. So don't be surprised to see prices fluctuate.
- Any food price is still free to go down when, for example, it's marked for weekend special, or when supplies become more abundant.
- Prices of "raw" foods are exempt from the ceiling and will vary as always. The list includes mainly fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, and eggs and fresh fish arriving on the counter in their natural, unprocessed form. Expect their prices to vary through the fall season.
- The ceiling covers all other groceries and foods eaten away from home. Prices can bounce, but no higher than in the 30-day period preceding the mid-August wage-price action, or alternately, no higher than on May 25, 1970.

Limited food price gains thus far in 1971 suggest that grocery store prices for the entire year will average no more than 3 percent higher than in 1970. This will be the smallest yearly increase since 1967. Prices at eating places are rising much more slowly this year, too.

WELL KNOWN AND LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

About "Agriculture USA." In all its parts, agriculture is both the Nation's largest industry and its largest employer. Modern American agriculture gets food to you where you want it, assures its quality, produces more food per acre than ever before, and gives you more food for your money than in any other country in the world. Agriculture serves you by employing environmental and conservation practices to improve the quality of the land, water and air -- providing recreation sites, protecting from flood damage, making the landscape more attractive. Basic to much modern agriculture is research. Agricultural research continues to improve farm efficiency, develop new products, fight disease, and look the world over for new plants. Facts and figures on these fascinating feats of American agriculture are included in a new USDA leaflet, "Agriculture USA." Writers, educators, consumers -- anyone interested in knowing about the many facets of agriculture -- will find the little leaflet an informative source. Copies of the publication are available free from the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

PLENTIFUL FOODS FOR SEPTEMBER

Get Good Marks For Good Eating. For the golden back-to-school days of September, the Plentiful Foods List features golden, luscious fresh pears. And other foods on the List can go a long way in handling those school day appetites -- fresh purple plums, potatoes, split peas, eggs, broiler-fryers, peanuts and peanut products. Fresh pears will also appear on the October Plentiful List along with canned pears, fresh apples, canned applesauce, apple juice, potatoes, pork, and eggs.

FALL FOOD PREVIEW

HERE'S WHAT FALL HAS COOKING FOR CONSUMERS:

As always, fall will be a time of harvest abundance. A big 1971 harvest is in store for many crops, including food grains and most fall fruits. Broiler, turkey, beef, and pork supplies are largest this time of year. Thus, autumn is the season when food prices, like the weather, traditionally cool off a bit.

Take your pick at the meat counter. Fresh cuts of beef, veal, lamb, and processed and frozen meats will be priced about like now, held in place by the ceiling. As autumn ripens, beef will become more plentiful, but strong demand will deter lower prices.

Pork still means economy. Pork items, from fresh cuts to bacon, appear in good supply and below 1970's prices. Like beef, supplies of pork are largest in the fall, so retail prices could become even more reasonable later on this year. Watch for specials.

Get set for gobblers. Turkey prices ordinarily rise into the holiday season. But the large supplies and the May 1970 ceiling price will hold prices to a penny or two per pound over right now. Chicken prices will ease down a little during the months ahead as production increases seasonally.

Eggs will remain a good buy. Since they're exempt from the ceiling, egg prices will rise, as usual, during the fall. But prices may not go quite as high as last December's nationwide average of a moderate 58 cents a dozen.

An assortment of bumper harvests will deck out the produce section. Except for slightly fewer apples, there are more fall fruits this year. Harvests of sweet and sour cherries, pears, grapes, and walnuts are especially large this season; prices should be below last fall's. Bananas have been lower priced so far this year, too.

The frosty season holds plenty of cabbages, cauliflower, and potatoes. It looks like another generous potato crop, although a smaller harvest of sweetpotatoes. Onions may be priced somewhat higher than last fall's low levels. Early prospects suggest a price rise for early fall tomatoes.

Up and down the market aisles, most canned and frozen fruits and vegetables are priced higher than a year ago. Canned and frozen vegetable supplies about like last year's are fairly tight. Among processed fruits, apricots have been quite reasonable, and larger crops portend ample supplies of canned peaches, pears, fruit cocktail, apple sauce, and apple juice. Frozen grapefruit juice abounds among the processed citrus choices.

Frozen orange juice prices are higher now because of very strong demand this year. Fresh chilled orange juice has gained in popularity but has changed little in price this year.

Fish entrees are still governed by a small world catch. Prices for all fish items have been on the rise, but the price ceilings will hold the line for canned and frozen fish foods.

Glancing in the condiment cabinet, brewing a pot of coffee to take off the chill will cost the same or less than last fall if it's fresh, but a little more if it's instant. Hot chocolate costs no more this year. Flour and sugar prices, you've noted, are a little higher, while strong demand has boosted salad/cooking oils, margarine.



HOW ABOUT A DATE?

For An Open Dating Conference. If you have an opinion -- or an open mind on open dating of foods, you have a chance to express your sentiments -- or listen to other points of view. Your chance is the Food Stability and Open Dating Conference, October 21-22, at Rutgers University. The Conference is sponsored by the University's Food Science Department with assistance from USDA's Economic Research Service. It is planned to provide an opportunity for industrial, legislative, governmental, and consumer groups -- as well as the general public -- to review, debate, and exchange ideas and information on the need and operation of open dating. Four program sessions will deal with: Research, the consumer's viewpoint, the retailer's viewpoint, and a legislative review. For information on the program, registration, and other details, contact Dr. N.D. Pintauro, Program Coordinator, Food Science Department, College of Agricultural and Environmental Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903. The telephone number is (Area Code 201) 247-1766.

AGRICULTURE IN THE ENVIRONMENT

You Can't Have One Without The Other. How has -- and does -- agriculture affect the environment? What factors must be considered in planning for the wisest use of land? Environmental quality -- who pays for what? These are some of the questions raised, answered, and discussed in a new USDA booklet, "Agriculture In The Environment." Based on studies and articles developed by USDA's Economic Research Service, the fact-filled booklet takes a look at the environmental problems caused by agriculture, agricultural problems caused by polluted environment, and some things that can be done to correct and prevent both. Single free copies are available from the Publications Office, Office of Management Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

A RESOURCEFUL RESOURCE

To Keep You In The Know. Much of the education material distributed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture deals with food -- how to shop for it, care for it, prepare it, and use it effectively for healthful diets. There is literally "something for everybody" among the dozens of booklets, leaflets, films, displays, and other materials on food and nutrition. A recently published bibliography, listing a large selection of these materials, can be an aid to nutritionists, home economists, teachers, and others who are working to educate the consumer to be more knowledgeable about food and nutrition. Single free copies of the bibliography, "USDA Consumer Education Materials for Wise Food Shopping and Nutritious Meal Planning," can be ordered from the Information Division, Consumer and Marketing Service, USDA, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, New York 10007.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone DU8-5437. Please include your zipcode.